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ABSTRACT

Various aspects of effective secondary school athletic program administration are discussed. Separate sections outline factors school principals should consider concerning role of the athletic program in the overall curriculum, program management, safety and care of equipment, criteria for student participation, participation requirements, development of good sportsmanship, and crowd control. A description of the athletic program in the Edina (Minnesota) secondary schools is provided as an example of a successfully organized program. (LP)

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SUPERVISING THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM

No single school activity receives more public attention than does the school's athletic program. More than half of all secondary school students participate in a variety of athletic activities.

Educators agree that numerous benefits are derived by promoting student participation in the athletic program. Conspicuous among these benefits are increased classroom incentives, improved school spirit and student morale, improved student-faculty relations, student self-awareness, and community involvement and support. Even with these advantages, however, the average school district provides less than two percent of the budget necessary to operate school athletic programs.

What Makes a Good Athletic Program

The principal is the key to the success of the school academic program as well as the athletic program. A. E. Blecke, writing in the November 1979 issue of the Bulletin says, "Administrators in reality have the ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the athletic program. We administrators can try to blame the coaches, the parents, and the changing values of society for many problems that crop up in relation to high school athletics. In reality, however, it all comes back to our not having the courage to control the operation of the program in a sound educational manner." It is the principal's responsibility to keep the athletic program in proper perspective with the entire educational operation of the school.

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The basic components of a good athletic program are:

- clearly stated purpose
- well-defined policies
- support of the chief administrator and school board
- adequate facilities
- financial support
- program leadership.

Managing the School Athletic Program

In many communities the leadership capabilities of the principal are judged as much by the school's athletic program as by its academic achievement. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that while the athletic program is an integral part of the school educational program, its importance is kept in perspective.

The customary philosophy of the school athletic program has evolved from years of experience and the leadership of many school administrators. In 1962, NASSP President Eugene S. Thomas, speaking at the National Conference on Secondary School Athletic Administrators, stated: "State athletic associations have had tremendous influence in the orderly development of athletics and in directing this important out-of-school activity toward sound educational goals." Today, as then, the cooperative efforts of state principals' associations and state activities associations provide essential sources of assistance and sound direction for interscholastic activities.

Athletic program goals and objectives should be an outgrowth of the school philosophy and have as their objective development of good health, integrity, self-sufficiency, dedication, and humaneness. Emphasis on attainment of educational objectives in an athletic program does not de-emphasize "winning." Winning is the spirit and ultimate goal of every competition, but it is not an end in itself. Secondary school athletic programs should be evaluated primarily on participant achievement of written goals and objectives.

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that competitive athletics provide a laboratory for learning within the academic program. Consider the principal's checklist for supervising a good school athletic program:

- ✓ Is the school philosophy statement reflected in written athletic goals? Athletic codes?
- ✓ Does the philosophy statement compare favorably with NFHSAA and State Association written philosophy?
- ✓ Is the interscholastic program an integral part of the school curriculum?

- ✓ Are activities designed for progressive skill development? Within the students' capabilities?
- ✓ Is participant sportsmanship being taught?
- ✓ Is the statement of purpose communicated to coaches, students, and community members?
- ✓ Does the leadership model the philosophy?
- ✓ Do major objectives benefit students?
- ✓ Do job descriptions of athletic director and coaches reflect the philosophy?
- ✓ Does the awards program focus on team concepts?

Safety and Care of Equipment

The top priority should be given to the safety of equipment and facilities. Coordinated efforts of the principal, athletic director, and coach must ensure that participants are provided with safe and comfortable equipment for all athletic events. Safety requires care and consideration in selecting good equipment. While sporting goods dealers are in a position to offer recommendations, experienced high school and college coaches and trainers are a valuable source.

Poor purchasing practices and improper maintenance procedures cost schools millions of dollars each year. Central to good management is judicious selection and proper maintenance of equipment. Guidelines should be developed and enforced by the entire athletic staff. These guidelines should cover purchasing, inventory, issuing and collecting, proper maintenance, and storage of equipment.

Improper use of equipment causes more rapid deterioration than does excessive use. Coaches should be required to give strict attention to the proper use of equipment and hold students accountable. Proper storage is critical to the life of equipment. Storage rooms should be well ventilated, light, clean, cool, and free from dampness. Facilities should be available for making minor repairs, and equipment should be marked to facilitate identification and inventory.

Student Participation: Right or Privilege?

The courts have consistently recognized student participation in athletics as a privilege rather than a right. Once the student is granted the privilege, however, the responsibility and accountability for supervision are clearly with school administrators. Recent court decisions have directed specific challenges to administrators. A 1981 superior court decision in Seattle, for example, found a school negligent for failure to:

1. Properly instruct in appropriate skills, and

2. Adequately warn of potential dangers.

The implication is clear: The responsibility for establishing organizational policies and guidelines for school-sponsored activities lies with the administrator and the coaches/advisers assigned to carry them out.

A number of recommendations were made to the Seattle Board of Education in response to accusations of negligence. A summary of these recommendations is worthy of consideration by all school administrators:

- Maintain central accounting records of athletic equipment and transportation costs by individual sport.
- Require students and parents to sign an assumption risk form.
- Revise minimum qualifications of coaches.
- Develop a set of procedures and criteria for selecting coaches.
- Review the collective bargaining agreement as it relates to reduction in force (RIF) and school assignment of coaches.
- Require continuing education for coaches and pay their fees to clinics.
- Strengthen the athletic health care and training program by requiring injury records; by initiating school evaluation of its program, equipment, and facilities; and by improving program management.
- Require coaches of certain sports to have Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training.
- Provide schools with improved training equipment.
- Improve maintenance of athletic fields, including park department fields used.
- Develop a curriculum for athletics.
- Provide coaches with materials on new playing techniques and the safety hazards of sports.

Requirements for Participation

Santee Ruffin, in The Principal's Role in Interscholastic Sports (NASSP, 1982), stated, "Interscholastic sports are extracurricular; they are not

substitutes for strong academic programs. The literature lists numerous cases of athletes who became stars in their schools and towns and then received free rides in the classroom and the community. Little was expected in the classroom as long as they were making touchdowns, scoring baskets, or winning races." Research supports the long-held contention of coaches that scholastic achievement and athletic achievement go hand in hand. Poor achievers can ill afford the time required for participating in most athletic activities. It is important for schools to establish and monitor requirements for student participation and see that these standards are strictly enforced. Consideration should be given to the following.

Students should:

- Make satisfactory progress toward their diploma objective.
- Exhibit a satisfactory conduct record . . . on, as well as off, the field.
- Pass a physical examination.
- Have proper insurance against injury.

Emphasis on Good Sportsmanship

Our society places too much emphasis on the importance of winning. Perhaps the influence of professional sports and treatment by the media have contributed to deterioration of sportsmanship among students and spectators.

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association has developed the following suggestions for upgrading sportsmanship in the school community:

- Approach the problem through leagues. Have them set standards that would eliminate undesirable conduct, yells, etc.
- Promote assembly programs that are positive; involve the coach.
- Work with cheerleaders - a positive influence.
- Train public address announcers to take a positive approach.
- Use bumper stickers, posters, etc.
- Define procedures to treat opponents with courtesy.
- Emphasize the coach's influence on the student body and other fans.
- Establish high standards for coaches.
- Encourage classroom teachers to address the subject of good sportsmanship.

- Enlist support of the media.
- Stress sportsmanship in clinics for officials.
- Develop a theme - perhaps a Code of Ethics - and publish it in school publications.
- Stress sportsmanship at cheerleaders' conferences, coaches' conferences, leadership conferences and camps.
- Stress sportsmanship at administrators' workshops - use flyers, resolutions, etc.
- Develop an awareness program - contests for slogans, posters, programs for improvement, etc.
- Sponsor TV or radio blurbs on sportsmanship.

To Illustrate

Seattle Public Schools
Donald Steele, Superintendent

815 4th Ave. North
Seattle, Wash. 98109

Crowd control is an area of vital concern in the Seattle Public Schools. Principals and athletic directors are expected to make detailed plans for dealing with crowd control. The following guidelines have been developed to help them do so:

- ✓ Identify and list anticipated needs and contingencies.
- ✓ Prepare written policies and procedures for each item on the list.
- ✓ Communicate the policies, procedures, and performance expectations to all persons and groups involved in the event.
- ✓ Select, instruct, supervise, and evaluate management, supervisors, and security personnel.
- ✓ Prepare and communicate effective techniques of management and supervision.
- ✓ Hold a follow-up session to update information and/or resolution of problems.
- ✓ Establish written behavioral standards and expectations for coaches, players, students, band, cheerleaders, spectators, and management personnel. Communicate these in a variety of ways, expect them to be followed, and do something when they aren't.

- ✓ Establish and communicate policies and emergency procedures regarding fire; drinking and possession of alcoholic beverages; possession, use, or sale of drugs; medical emergencies; lost and found articles; bringing foods, beverages, radios, and tape decks into the gym or stadium; bomb threats; score clock, lighting or other facility failures; transportation problems.

- ✓ Written emergency procedures should be clearly understood by the public address announcer.

- ✓ Identify supervisors and ushers by use of jackets, arm bands, or badges and expect them to be active and visible to quickly discourage problems.

- ✓ Expect and encourage management personnel, supervisors, and security people to avoid becoming too involved in watching the event and to be observant, active, and consistent in applying rules and procedures.

- ✓ Be consistent in applying policies and rules; be supportive of your management and supervisory personnel.

- ✓ Avoid seating bands or spectators near the visiting team bench or the visiting team's spectator seating area.

- ✓ Take action when someone is behaving in an undesirable way or violating rules of good citizenship. Actions speak louder than words.

- ✓ Have admissions, ticket sales, and parking lot personnel screen people for possession of alcoholic beverages, intoxication, and abnormal or suspicious behavior. Alert crowd control supervisors to observe potential troublemakers.

- ✓ Supervise the rest rooms.

- ✓ Establish precise job descriptions, expectations, and authority levels of all working personnel and inform them of all rules, regulations, and emergency procedures.

Edina Senior High School
James L. Cobalka, Principal

6754 Valley View Dr.
Edina, Minn. 77435

Two athletic coordinators serve Edina Senior High School and the district's two junior high schools. The athletic directors are on the teacher pay scale but they receive a stipend for the extra service rendered. A

coordinator must hold a master's degree in physical education or athletics or educational administration. A thorough understanding of sports management and at least five years of teaching/coaching are also required.

Edina clearly spells out the functions of the athletic coordinator:

1. Program Development

   - Determines the need for support.
   - Formulates the goals and objectives.
   - Recommends the addition of a sport.
   - Organizes the interscholastic and intramural athletic programs for grades 7 through 12.
   - Develops or assists with the development of schedules for all sports.
   - Evaluates the interscholastic and intramural athletic programs.

2. Staff Development

   - Determines the need for appropriate personnel to staff the interscholastic and intramural athletic programs.
   - Assists with the recruitment of personnel.
   - Conducts meetings of the coaching staff.

3. Facilities and Equipment

   - Determines the facilities and equipment needed for interscholastic and intramural athletics in the upper and lower divisions.
   - Establishes the procedures for the proper care and maintenance of all facilities and equipment, and directs inventory of equipment.

4. Finances

   - Submits an annual budget for the athletic program.
   - Controls the expenditures of athletic funds.
   - Directs the preparation of requisitions for athletic supplies and equipment.
   - Directs the preparation of vouchers for payment of officials, workers at games and meets, and coaches for special assignments, etc.

- Collects and documents the receipt of users' fees.

- Holds responsibility for collecting and depositing gate receipts and determines which sports should charge admission.

5. Program Services - Primary

- Schedules or approves schedules for all interscholastic athletic events.

- Secures officials for all games and meets.

- Secures necessary personnel to conduct all athletic games and events.

- Directs the verification of eligibility of all boys and girls who participate in interscholastic athletics, and submits the required lists to other schools and to the Minnesota State High School League.

- Develops procedures and instructs the coaches as to the handling of students who are injured while participating in a practice, game, or meet.

- Checks the condition of playing areas; postpones meets or games when necessary; notifies coaches, opponents, officials; cancels transportation; and assumes responsibility for details in rescheduling the event.

- Performs other duties as may, from time to time, be assigned by the principal.

6. Program Services - Secondary

- Directs the securing of information and preparation of game programs.

- Plans, supervises the arrangements, and conducts conference, sectional, and regional meets and tournaments held in Edina.

7. Internal Relations

- Coordinates publicity for all athletic events.

- Assigns tasks to be arranged when an Edina athletic team participates in a sectional, regional, or state tournament.

- Assists in developing solutions to problems in athletics presented by the administration, faculty, students, the Student Council, and the public.

8. External Relations

- Makes the arrangements and conducts an annual invitational meet, match, or tournament in one or more sports when conference schedules and facilities permit.

- Coordinates at least one conference sport, which involves holding coaches' meetings, scheduling practices and games, arranging for times and places, and hiring officials.

- Assumes responsibility for running regional, sectional tournaments in various sports.

- Explains and interprets the interscholastic and intramural athletic programs to clubs and other organizations upon request.

- Attends conference, regional, state, and national meetings relating to secondary school interscholastic and intramural athletic programs.

- Participates in media interviews, program promotion, and interpretation of interscholastic and intramural athletic programs.

- Represents Edina Public Schools at Lake Conference Athletic Directors meetings, regional meetings, and Minnesota State High School League meetings, and serves on state committees at the request of the Minnesota State High School League.

9. Records and Reports

- Obtains and keeps on file coaches' athletic participation reports.

- Prepares financial records and reports.

Apple Valley High School
Tony Balsamo, Principal

11837 Navajo Rd.
Apple Valley, Calif. 92307

In the interest of keeping parents and students informed about the potential dangers of participating in football, the athletic director publishes a "football safety list" and distributes it to students and parents prior to the beginning of practice. The information is presented in a factual and precise manner, primarily to raise awareness about the importance of proper equipment fit and safety precautions.

Athletes and their parents sign the list to verify that the information has been explained to them; that they understand the list of rules and procedures; and that they appreciate the necessity of using proper techniques while participating in sports.

The list includes information on the following topics:

- Techniques athletes should practice to ensure maximum safety.
- Rules regarding use of helmet in blocking and tackling.
- Proper body position and physiological responses for types of injuries.
- Notice of daily strengthening exercises given during workout.
- Basic hitting (control) position and fundamental techniques.
- Rules prohibiting certain types of blocking and tackling.
- Potential dangers and a list of possible injuries.
- Explanation of proper fit and use of equipment (shoulder pads, helmet, hip pads, etc.).

Tenino High School
Larry Maguire, Principal

P.O. Box 42
Tenino, Wash. 98598

This small high school followed a systematic procedure to develop an athletic code. The school superintendent, school administrator, and members of the coaching staff discussed preliminary plans for the code in a two-day workshop retreat. A proposed philosophy and code were developed. Ideas were invited from coaches of all sports. The local newspaper editor was invited to attend. The proposed philosophy and code were

submitted to the state athletic association and student body for suggestions. The draft was then submitted to the school board for adoption.

This *Practitioner* was prepared by Cliff A. Gillies, Executive Director, Washington Interscholastic Activities Association and William Clay Parrish, NASSP's Assistant Director of Research.

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